

Bancroft Elementary School. Principal Susan M. Lopez has demonstrated a deep passion for the success of her students, as well as a commitment to creating a warm and welcoming learning environment. The tireless efforts of educators and staff at Julia Bancroft Elementary School have earned them the "Level I School" status for the past two years.

I'm so proud to represent the faculty, students, and staff of Julia Bancroft Elementary School, and I cannot wait to hear about their future successes. I ask you to join me in congratulating Julia Bancroft Elementary School for being selected as a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School.

RECOGNIZING SARAH MASON AS THE HURLBURT AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 398 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND OVERALL TEACHER OF THE YEAR FOR 2014

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 12, 2014*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize Ms. Sarah Mason as the Hurlburt Air Force Association Chapter 398 Elementary School and the esteemed Overall Teacher of the Year for 2014. Ms. Mason was among three educators selected throughout Northwest Florida for her inspiring efforts to bolster her students' interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, and I am pleased to honor her outstanding achievements.

Though Ms. Mason has been teaching for ten years, she was keenly aware of her passion for putting others before herself long before she stepped foot in a classroom as an educator. Her teaching aspirations took flight in high school, when she joined the Gold Seal Quality Care program her junior year, which afforded her the opportunity to inspire the young minds of local elementary school students. Ms. Mason built on this positive experience and pursued a Bachelor of Education at the University of West Florida. She has spent the last seven years of her decade of teaching at Blue Angels Elementary School in Pensacola, Florida.

Ms. Mason credits her family for igniting in her curiosity and passion for science, which indirectly led to the chemical reaction rocket experiments in her backyard as a child that have helped her cultivate tomorrow's scientists and engineers as an adult. She brings science to life in her classroom through hands-on activities, like the pegboard "engineering wall" that allows students to engineer their own creations using pegs, rubber bands, and pipes and the building and analyzing of marble roller coasters to understand mathematical, scientific and engineering concepts through real world applications.

Ms. Mason also welcomes the latest technology in her classroom, including iPads loaded with STEM applications that stimulate student interest in outer space through the engineering of models of irregular galaxies and discovering the complex motions of the planets of our solar system, as well as constructing motors. In addition, Northwest Florida is home to some of the world's finest engi-

neers, and Ms. Mason has partnered with Gulf Power Company making it possible for her students to engage its engineers in the developing of their classroom robots.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate Ms. Mason on this well-earned achievement of Hurlburt Air Force Association Chapter 398 Elementary School and the esteemed Overall Teacher of the Year for 2014 and thank her for her commitment to service and dedication to the Northwest Florida community. My wife Vicki joins me in wishing Ms. Mason all the best for continued success.

HONORING NATIVE HERITAGE MONTH AND SACRIFICES MADE BY NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS

**HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 12, 2014*

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of Trickster Art Gallery for its presentation of Native American Veteran artwork in honor of Native Heritage Month and Veterans Day.

During the month of November, we celebrate the ancestry and time-honored traditions of Native Americans, as their contributions have been and continue to be instrumental in the development of our great Nation. Native Americans have helped shape American conservation policy, enriched American culture and have fought gallantly for our country.

From the Revolutionary War to current combat missions, American Indians have played a vital role in the United States Military. In World War II, for example, over 375 Navajo Marines were trained as Code Talkers and famously saved countless lives with their unbreakable codes.

Native Americans continue to serve honorably on behalf of our Nation. According to the Department of Defense, American Indians and Alaska Natives have a greater proportion of Veterans than the general United States population. As a Veteran myself, I understand the great sacrifice and courage of the Native American Veteran community.

I am proud to represent the Eighth Congressional District where the diverse cultures of our great Nation are celebrated.

COMMENDING THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY ON ITS NEW JEAN R. PACKARD CENTER

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 12, 2014*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority on the ground breaking for the new Jean R. Packard Occoquan Center. Work on this multi-purpose facility will kick-off of a major rejuvenation effort throughout Occoquan Regional Park, which sits in Fairfax County just across the Occoquan River from the Town of Occoquan in Prince William County.

The 400 acre park is popular with families, boaters, and fisherman with its easy access to

the river, athletic fields, picnic areas, and connections to multiple regional trails, including the Gerald E. Connolly Cross County Trail and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. The modernization of this regional park will feature a new entrance with greater roadside visibility, a loop trail traversing the entire park, a landscaped waterfront plaza, and other infrastructure improvements.

A new focal point of the park will be the Jean R. Packard Center, named in honor of my good friend and mentor. Jean recently retired from the Regional Park Board after 24 years of dedicated service. It is difficult to overstate the tremendous environmental legacy Jean has cultivated here in Northern Virginia. A veteran of the Women's Army Corps during World War II, Jean moved to Fairfax in 1951 and got her start in public service much the same way I did as president of her neighborhood civic association. Thus began five decades of civic engagement, particularly focused on environmental stewardship and protection.

She was the first woman elected as chairman the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 1972 and was an unabashed environmentalist before it became trendy. During my 14 years on the County Board starting in 1995, Jean was a member of my trusted kitchen cabinet and helped shape our award-winning environmental agenda. After her tenure on the Board of Supervisors, Jean became the first woman elected to the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors. Though not continuous, she has served on the Board multiple times over the past 40 years, and she is in the midst of her most recent term at the age of 91!

She was a founding member of the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, which recently renamed its lifetime achievement award in Jean's honor, and she has served on the national board of the Sierra Club. She has been recognized as Fairfax County's Citizen of the Year and Fairfax County Conservationist of the Year. I was proud to present Jean with the Fairfax County Park Authority's Sally Ormsby Environmental Stewardship Award, which is named in memory of our dear friend and fellow community leader.

Fittingly, the new center that will bear Jean's name will include a robust educational component on our local history and the environment. It will tie in with the nearby Suffragist memorial within the park, and it will feature an interpretive collection showcasing the native flora and fauna of Northern Virginia at the time of John Smith's historic expedition in 1608. From its perch overlooking the river, the Jean R. Packard Center will put on full display the beauty of our local parks and demonstrate the value of protecting environmental treasures like the Occoquan for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority for undertaking this grand park renewal and for its stewardship of its many other properties throughout the region, and I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the immeasurable contributions of Jean Packard a true environmental champion, who has dedicated her life to protecting and improving the natural resources that make our community such a wonderful place to live, work, and play.